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Aviation Accident Investigator
Aviation Safety - Western Pacific Region

Date: February 21, 2023

Subject: WPR24LA092, Summary of pilot statement

Contact: Glen Rolfe, Pilot, Frontier Agricultural Services

The following is a summary of the statement the pilot provided the Federal Aviation Administration Inspector:

The pilot reported that he was on an aerial application flight and was the sole pilot on N422DX. On December 5th about 1730, a main rotor blade struck a powerline. He was spraying for 2.5 hours on multiple fields across the Imperial Valley and the 24-acre field was adjacent Hwy 98 with big power lines on the south and 1/4 west of The intersecting road. The pilot added that he was maneuvering the helicopter at low altitudes north and south. Skipping every other pass, the pilot was halfway done finishing his last pass when he turned the helicopter and dropped down in the field heading north. The helicopter descended over the big lines with the west smaller power polls in sight. During the descent, the helicopter's right booms struck the line which came across the field on a diagonal, followed by the main rotor blade. A vibration ensued so he landed in the nearby field. After inspecting for any powerlines hanging off the helicopter, he then flew a half mile away to a support truck where he then shut the engine off and inspected the helicopter and found one blade damaged. It was then decided that the best thing was to trailer the helicopter back to operator's shop. Post examination of the main rotors revealed that one blade was beyond repair and had to be replaced.

UPDATE: requests to provide 6120 on 2/21/24, 2/28/24, 5/1/24

After multiple requests, the pilot did not submit the National Transportation Safety Board Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident Report Form 6120.1.